

# CHI SUCCESS STORIES

## BOB

~ by Rozann Downing ~

Bob, 44, moved into the CHI /Behavioral Health Initiatives, Inc. (BHI) Puryear permanent housing residence in August of 2001. Bob carries the diagnosis of Paranoid Schizophrenia.

According to records, Bob was a frequent patient at Western Mental Health Institute (WMHI). In 1998, Bob was hospitalized seven times. The shortest of these stays was three weeks and the longest was three and a half months.

I spoke with Bob and his case manager about his inpatient stays prior to his moving into the Puryear Group Home. According to their reports, Bob has never been able to consistently stay on his medication.

Bob stated, "I would take it for a few weeks, and when things got to going well, I didn't think I needed it".

So, he would stop taking it. His case manager added that the usual scenario would be that Bob would become unstable and would go out into the community and begin panhandling. He would approach people and tell them that he needed money for bizarre things such as a "brain transplant". Eventually, the cops would be called, and Bob would find himself on his way to WMHI. This situation would occur about every two to three months (at the longest). Bob said it was "a never ending cycle". Overall, Bob was hospitalized three times from 1999-2001, but only for a couple of weeks each time.

Bob was one of the first residents of the CHI /BHI Puryear Group Home. Bob has been with BHI for over a year, and we are proud to say that, since moving into our home, he has not been hospitalized, and he has not received any type of crisis services.

Bob no longer feels the need to panhandle. One of his goals is learning to manage his money and saving for those "high dollar items". He is making tremendous progress. Another goal that Bob is working on is building a relationship with his siblings. Bob reports that his family had trouble dealing with him because of his inability to take his medications and "act right". BHI is happy to report that last month Bob's sister came up from Georgia to visit with him.

When asked what he likes best about living in a home in the community, Bob smiles and replies "everything". I believe that says it all.

**Joe**  
~ by Rozann Downing ~

Joe, 34, resides at the CHI /BHI permanent housing residence in Henry County. Joe carries the diagnosis of psychotic disorder NOS, impulse control disorder and moderate mental retardation. Joe has lived most of his life with his mother and father in a single-side mobile home in rural Tennessee County. The living conditions were extremely poor. The family disposed of waste by tossing it out the back door, resulting in an abundance of mice, rats and other pests. The family also kept hunting dogs in the house. Sadly to say, the hunting dogs were not house-trained. The smell was unbearable.

Joe, himself, was filthy and lacked the skills needed to properly care for his self. Joe reported that at night, he would sleep with the "coon dogs" and they would help him keep warm.

Joe moved into his CHI /BHI home in August of 2001. When he first arrived, he was quiet and would rarely make eye contact. Over a year has gone by, and Joe is not the same person that he was when he moved in. Joe's medical health has increased to the point where he just needs routine medical check-ups. His personal hygiene and self-care skills have drastically increased. He even reports, "I look good enough to get a girlfriend". His self-esteem has skyrocketed. The man who once could not look you in the eye will now go up to strangers and start conversations.

The biggest achievement, to date, has been Joe's progress toward managing his finances. When he lived with his parents, he never received any of his disability checks. He was always told that the money was being spent to pay off his bills, even though he did not have any bills. Now, Joe is very efficient with his finances. Joe has been able to save enough money to start a small lawn mowing business. Joe has purchased a riding mower, weed-eater, leaf blower and a small storage shed to house his tools.

Joe earns approximately \$350 a month mowing lawns. BHI hired Joe this summer to care for the lawns at both properties in Puryear, and we could not be any happier with his performance.

Joe has tapped a lot of potential that he never knew existed. The new abilities were always there; he just never had the encouragement. The staff at the Puryear Group Home supplied the encouragement needed for Joe's talents and abilities to shine through.

**Ms. H**

**~ by Chere' Bradshaw ~**

Ms. H is a 27 year-old female. Ms. H has a diagnosis of depression and alcoholism. Ms. H is a mother of two small children. She moved 12 times in one year before coming to HELPI NG, CDC housing in October of 2001. As a result of the housing and support services she received, she was able to finish her nursing degree at the University of Tennessee in May 2002.

Ms. H moved into the community in March 2002, and into her own permanent housing. In April of 2002, she married a local business executive. She continues to follow-up with community-based services and currently serves on the Board of HELPI NG, CDC.

**JD**

**~ by Chere' Bradshaw ~**

JD has been living at Mid-South HealthNet since June 28, 2001. Her diagnosis is schizophrenia (disorganized type). Her family was homeless and had a history of mental illness, and they were unable to care for her. Fifteen to 20 years ago, JD was living in shelters and on the streets when she was brutally gang raped and had battery acid thrown on her. As a result of the battery acid, she has skin deformities and is legally blind. She has had numerous hospitalizations. After each hospitalization, she would be discharged back to the streets or shelters. She would begin to decompensate and have to be re-hospitalized.

Upon admission to the Higbee House, JD would not interact with the other members of the house. She stayed in bed with the covers over her head. After a period of time, she began to interact with the group. Currently, she is medically stable, has gained 30 lbs. and is doing great. She participates in the in-house and community activities. JD states, "I have a great life and a great future"!

Since her admission to Mid-South HealthNet's Higbee House on June 28, 2001, JD has not been re-hospitalized.

### **Linda**

~ by Mary Gormley ~

Linda is a registered nurse with a history of suicidal depression. She is also recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. Linda entered the Foundations Associates program 10 months ago and has worked through the step-up levels and is now living in one of the CHI funded duplexes in West Greenwood in East Nashville.

Linda continues in the after care program at Foundations Associates and goes to recovery group meetings. Her depression and addiction history caused her to lose her job as a registered nurse. Currently, Linda is focused on her continued healing and recovery and is not sure that she will go back to nursing.

Linda describes her current living situation as a "miracle that has been extremely helpful in her healing.

"This home has given me a start over in life," Linda said. "I am beginning to set goals for my future, and even thinking about going back to school. This environment with the 2 duplexes has created a community where we all help each other out – it is a wonderful place to live. I would never have been able to create this on my own".

### **Anonymous**

~ by Mary Simons ~

A 36 year-old female diagnosed with bipolar disorder and substance abuse went mostly untreated for 20 years. She was involved in an abusive relationship. When she left that relationship, she became homeless. She has been receiving appropriate services for about 2 years. She has lived successfully in independent housing for about 1½ years. She is now pursuing her dream of music. She plays guitar and sings and is a member (and leader) of a local choir and performs locally with a musical group.